

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4796

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6967

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJ: TRANSPORT MINISTER YAACOBI'S VIEWS ON NEGOTIATIONS
WITH PLO

REF: TEL AVIV 6575

1. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING DECEMBER 2 ON CIVIL AVIATION MATTERS (SEE SEPTTEL), MINISTER OF TRANSPORT GAD YAACOBI SAID HE WISHED TO RAISE A POLITICAL QUESTION. HE ASKED IF I WOULD COMMENT ON ARTICLE IN CURRENT ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE WHICH HE SAID QUOTES PRESIDENT FORD AS SAYING "NOT YET" WHEN ASKED ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS OR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PLO. I REPLIED THAT I HAD NOT SEEN THE ARTICLE BUT WAS CONFIDENT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARD THE PLO. THIS HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR IN STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY. I GENTLY CHIDED HIM FOR ADOPTING THE TOO FAMILIAR ISRAELI SENSITIVITY TO THE USE OF A WORD OR PHRASE BY THE PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY TO INDICATE A CHANGE IN POLICY BY THE US.

2. YAACOBI SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED DURING HIS RECENT US TRIP TO FIND THAT SOME AMERICANS THINK REFUSAL OF GOI TO NEGOTIATE WITH PLO LEADERS WAS BECAUSE THEY ARE TERRORISTS.
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HE SAID REASON FOR GOI POSITION WAS THAT AGREEMENT TO NEGOTIATE

WITH PLO AT PRESENT WOULD MEAN ACCEPTING PLO OBJECTIVE OF "SECULAR DEMOCRATIC PALESTINIAN STATE" WHICH WOULD ENCOMPASS PRESENT STATE OF ISRAEL. YAACOBI CONTINUED THAT "ONLY NEW POLITICAL STATE WHICH ISRAEL COULD DISCUSS WOULD BE ONE INCLUDING ONLY WEST BANK AND GAZA," ADDING THAT "PROBLEM IS NOT WITH WHOM TO NEGOTIATE BUT ABOUT WHAT."

3. COMMENT: AS REPORTED REFTEL, MINISTER OF INFORMATION YARIV USED PRETTY MUCH SAME LANGUAGE ABOUT NEGOTIATING WITH PALESTINIANS IN RADIO INTERVIEW ON JULY 14 BUT WAS PROMPTLY REPUDIATED BY CABINET ON JULY 16. NOW, AFTER RABAT AND ARAFAT'S UN SPEECH, I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT YAACOBI WOULD USE THIS FORMULATION. I FIND PERPLEXING, HOWEVER, YAACOBI'S STATEMENT ABOUT POSSIBLE ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS A "NEW STATE.. INCLUDING ONLY WEST BANK AND GAZA." AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENT WEST BANK/GAZA ENTITY IS ANATHEMA TO ISRAELI LEADERSHIP AND WE HAVE NOT SEEN OTHER SIGNS THAT THIS IS CHANGING. WHILE YAACOBI WAS CLEARLY NOT SPEAKING FOR GOI, HE DID MAKE A DELIBERATE STATEMENT WITH KNOWLEDGE THAT I WOULD REPORT IT TO WASHINGTON.
KEATING

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